

# Ohr Shabbos

## Shoneh Halachos - Hilchos Sfiras haOmer

The following is a translation of an excerpt from the Shoneh Halachos, a sefer by Rav Chaim Kanievsky that summarizes the halachos found in Mishnah Brurah and other sefarim.

1) Between Pesach and Shavuos, the talmidim of Rebbe Akiva were niftar, and so it is not appropriate to increase in our simcha. Therefore, we conduct ourselves with some aspects of aveilus from the second day of Pesach until Lag b'Omer (since that is when the talmidim stopped dying). And no day is excluded from this rule until Lag b'Omer, at which point everything becomes mutar again. And there are those who say the first 16 days of the Omer (from Pesach until the second day of Rosh Chodesh Iyaar) are also mutar, after which every day is assur except for Lag b'Omer.

And in our lands, the minhag is to be matir on the three days of Hagbala (which are the three days before Shavuos). And since there is an inyan to conduct ourselves with aveilus for 32 days, those who don't practise aveilus for the three days of Hagbala must conduct themselves with aveilus on Rosh Chodesh Iyaar, and on the first day of Hagbala until Netz during the day [this is in order to conduct at least part of the day with aveilus, and thus allow oneself to invoke the concept of mitzas k'kula, a small part of the day is already considered a full day]. Some are only matir on Rosh Chodesh Iyaar, Lag baOmer, and from Rosh Chodesh Sivan until Shavuos.

In this matter, one should follow the minhag of where they live. In a sofek, one can be maykil on something which is only a minhag. In one city, it is not appropriate for some people to follow one minhag and some others because of the issur of Lo Siggedu... And all the more so one should not take the kulas of two minhagim to reduce the number of days of aveilus, since each minhag contradicts the other. However one can be machmir like two minhagim and be machmir all the way from Pesach to Shavuos or Rosh Chodesh Iyaar except for Lag baOmer. But surely one is not obligated to do so. Rather, a person is free to choose whichever minhag he wishes, and one does not need to be worried that perhaps the minhag of his city is not so [editor's note: this may be because there is no clear minhag hamakom in our times].

However if one knows for a fact what the minhag of his city is, he is obliged to observe it, weather it is more machmir or maykil than he would like to be.

2) One should not marry a woman during sefira, even if it is a mitzvah for that individual to get married (for example, if he does not have children). However to re-marry a divorced wife is allowed. And one can perform arrusin, since if he does not, he may lose the opportunity to do it later. Likewise, one can make a seudah for the arrusin. However, nowadays, where we do arrusin at the same time as nessesin, we may still hold a seudah when a shidduch is made, but we may not have dancing at this seudah. All the more so we may not engage in dancing for non-mitzvah reasons. Even one who is maykil to take hair cuts and perform nessesin until Rosh Chodesh Iyaar, or from Rosh Chodesh Sivan until Shavuos, it is not clear if it is muttar to engage in dancing that is not mitzvah related. [editor's note: the minhag in chutz laAretz is to be maykil and allow dancing in this case]

## Parshas Emor

R' Gedalia Rand



The medrash says, "For the higher spheres where the yetzer hara is irrelevant one suffices ect, in the lower realms where the yetzer hara is present two אמירות are necessary as it says ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן ואמרת אליהם

Rav Gedaliah Schorr ztl, explains the nature of these two אמירות as follows, The nusach of our brachos begins with אשר קדשנו במצוותיו, וציוונו אשר קדשנו במצוותיו means that ה' imbued every one of us with the קדושה of the mitzvos. The mitzvos are sourced in very lofty realms and descend all the way into the depths of this world to sanctify our limbs and arteries which correspond to the specific mitzvos. וצונו means the we are commanded to nurture the holiness within ourselves through the doing of mitzvos and refraining from aveiros.

This is the explanation of the aforementioned medrash. The malachim's entire existence is that which they are commanded to do. We as humans however have a yetzer hara and must hold on to the kedusha inside of us. Hashem imbued the כהנים with a special purity thus the first אמר הכהנים אל, he then commanded them to uphold this ואמרת אליהם; טהרה.

Rav Wolbe wonders in עלי שור: If the Torah is a tremendous flame that ignites in our neshama with each and every utterance,

why then don't we feel it? He explains that we are numb to this holiness, because we are strangers to ourselves. If we were in touch with the kedusha already implanted within ourselves we would have a tremendous attachment to the Torah, yet the yetzer hara is a force that estranges ourselves from ourselves. This is why the yetzer hara is referred to a El'Zar.

The פסוק says jealousy causes ones bones to rot. Rav Wolbe explains that jealousy completely removes oneself from themselves. Their own being is abandoned; unattended he begins to rot!

The way to connect to the Torah is by connecting to our essence. The way to do this is through the מט' קנינים. שהתורה נקנית בהם. Each קנין draws us closer and closer to our true being, which is קדשנו במצוותיו.

Perhaps we can compare this phenomenon to a child who is brilliant and talented yet because he was bullied by his peers he thinks very lowly of himself and doesn't excel the way he should, rather his brilliance and talents lay latent. If only he understood who he really was!! However he is delusional and this sends him to the ends of the earth to find worth. This boy is us! If only we could tap into our true essence we be ecstatic in our service of Hashem and we wouldn't waste away searching elsewhere.

# Inspiring Stories

The phone rang in the home of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau of Netanya, a son of the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau. A young woman had called to ask him if he could please officiate at her wedding. "When is your wedding?" asked Rabbi Lau "A few days before Peach," she replied. He looked at the date on his calendar and realized that he could not make such a commitment. "I would love to help you," he said, "but it's impossible. That's one of the busiest times of the year for a rabbi. People come to me then to sell their chametz, and I have to be available to take care of the community's needs and answer their questions. Please find another rabbi who can help you." She thanked the rabbi and hung up the phone, but a few days later she called back again. "Please," she said, "please officiate at my wedding. It would mean so much to me. Rabbi Lau again explained that his duties to his community had to take precedence. The woman accepted his answer, but a few days later, she was back on the phone, pleading with new vigor. At this point, Rabbi Lau relented. On the day of the wedding, Rabbi Lau arrived at the hall and met the father of the bride. He was an elderly man who had come from Argentina to be at his daughter's wedding. The father, in a strong Yiddish accent, asked Rabbi Lau, "Where do you come from?" "I'm from Netanya, " the rabbi answered.

"And how about you?" "I'm from the Polish city of Piotrokow," he answered. "Did you ever hear of it?" Hearing the name of the city, Rabbi Lau was taken aback. His father, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau, was born in Piotrokow and lived there until the Nazis invaded, when he was 5 years old. His grandfather, the chief Rabbi of Piotrokow, was sent to his death in the Treblinka death camp. The name Piotrokow was deeply engraved in his mind. The man continued. "Do you know who the last couple was to be married in Piotrokow before the Nazis came in and wiped out the entire town?" he asked. "It was my wife and me, in 1942. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau married us off. Did you ever hear of him? He was the Chief Rabbi. Our wedding took place the night before the Nazis sent him to Treblinka." With tears in his eyes, Rabbi Lau said, "Of course I've heard of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Lau. He was my zeida. I'm named after him. My name is Moshe Chaim Lau. "My zeida married you off and I will continue the legacy and marry off your daughter. When your daughter called me to officiate at her wedding, at first I told her that I was too busy and she should find another rabbi. Now I know why I had to come to this wedding. The elderly man and Rav Lau met more than 70 years after the destruction of European Jewry. They strengthened the chain of our mesorah and stoked the faith of Klal Yisrael - that our nation lives on.

## Jewish History

### Yahrzeit of the Rif (1103)

Rabbi Isaac Al-Fasi (1013-1103), known by the acronym "Rif," was one of the earliest codifiers of the Talmud. In 1088 he was forced to flee his hometown of Fez, Morocco, to Spain, where he assumed the position of rabbi in Alusina (Lucene).

### Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Luntschitz, "Kli Yakar" (1619)

Born in the year 1550 in Luntschitz, Poland, with just the name Ephraim, the name Sholomo was added later during a life-threatening illness.

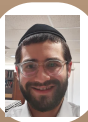
Rabbi Sholomo Efraim was a disciple of the famed Talmudist, Rabbi Sholomo Luria, author of the Yam Shel Sholomo, as well as the great Jewish kabalist and philosopher, Rabbi Judah Lowe, known as the "Maharal of Prague."

## Weekly Challenge

Find an example of something related to a melocha which we are more machmir about on Chol haMoed than we are on YomTov and Shabbos.

## A Glimpse Inside

R' David Serfaty



I grew up in Clanton Park. For high school, I attended Yeshivas Darchei Torah. I proceed to learn in Eretz Yisroel for four years, first in Yeshivas Torah Ohr for a short time, then in Yeshivas Noam HaTorah in Yerushalayim, headed by the Rosh Yeshivah Rav Dovid Aman, a talmid of Rav Reuven Feinstein and Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel. Shortly after, I got married, and about a year later joined the Toronto Kollel down south for a year. I then made the decision to move to Thornhill where the air quality is better. It's a huge zchus to be part of this chashuv kehilla.